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                      -* eBay Wants Buyers To Return! *-
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->From the Editor's Keyboard                "Saying it like it is!"
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At least for now, the PCI wireless adaptor tech guys' suggestion to resolve
my issues getting wireless compatibility to my wife's DSL set-up was no
good.  I got XP (what a waste of an OS, bring on TOS!!) and my adaptor card
installation still fails.  Guess I need to try tech support again.  Ugh,
more rounds of voicemail hell!

Speaking of TOS, I was recently thinking of the comments Joe made a couple
of weeks ago, and numerous times in the past.  It's news flash time.  The
majority of this magazine is contemporary computer technology and gaming
news.  Yes, the focus of A-ONE - as its name suggests - is Atari, in all its
glory, long past.  But, especially if you've been reading A-ONE for quite
some time, Atari users are still out there, and enthusiastic to say the
least.  While it's true the user and developer bases are small, those
remaining are devoted.  So where are you all?  Joe's "People Are Talking"
weekly column relies on you all.  The Atari newsgroups are the most popular
stomping grounds for the most "active" users of Atari computers.  And both
Joe and I read those groups daily, but there's little to read.  For the most
dedicated and knowledgeable of users out there, I find this puzzling.  There
is so much to share, in a public forum, yet the messages there are sparse on
on a weekly basis.  Activity in these newsgroups are vital to our community.
It's there where people congregate, converse, and learn from one another. In
return, Joe pulls the most interesting message threads, and pulls them all
together, and brings them to A-ONE.  This serves many purposes, but bringing
the info to those who don't visit usenet, and also for those who scan those
messages.  On a personal note, I can say that I usually learn a lot reading
Joe's column every week.  So, do us all a service - be more than an Atari
newsgroup lurker - participate.

Until next time...




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                          PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                        compiled by Joe Mirando
                          joe@atarinews.org




Hidi ho, friends and neighbors. Well, it looks like summer is creeping up
on us, and will be giving us a taste of those dog-days for a little while.
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Now, you've heard me talk (type) about global warming and the controversies large and small concerning it, right? Well, with all the noise Al Gore's been making with his movie, "An Inconvenient Truth", someone wrote an article saying that global warming is not the good, solid science that we (at least most of us) think it is.

I don't normally do this, but here's the link to the story:
http://www.canadafreepress.com/2006/harris061206.htm

I've got several problems with things that the story has to say, but it's interesting none the less.

Oh, one other thing... a couple of people have mentioned to me that, now that my wife and I are buying a house, Dana is going to rib me about yard work the way I ribbed him for several years after he and his wife bought their place.

Well, in the first place, Dana is a much better person than I am, and he'll probably take the high road and not return the jibes.

Second, Dana ENJOYS the yard work... or, if not the work itself, the results. Me? As long as things are neat and tidy, I don't need a yard that looks like it's prepping for Better Homes & Gardens. Add to that the fact that I'm allergic to grass pollen, and it's pretty easy to see that I'm not going to be going nuts in the yard.

Besides, my ribbing was always good-natured. It's not like I ever said that gardening and tending to yard work was stupid or anything. I've just always considered it a chore... I grew up doing yard work, but it never meant anything more to me than a chore that had to be done. It's like another one of Dana's passions who's allure escapes me... Golf.

There must be something to it, since it's popular with so many people, but I'll be damned if I can find anything in it that interests me. But that's okay. We don't all have to be the same, and I don't even feel the need to understand someone else's passions. They're part of what makes each of us unique. I don't have to share... or even understand... what "does it" for you in order to respect your right to it. And I've never understood how curtailing someone else's rights could possibly protect my own. But that's a topic for another time and place. <grin>

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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'Phantomm' asks for info on the differences between TOS versions for the Falcon:

"I have a fairly modified Falcon that has TOS 4.2.

All my other Falcons have TOS 4.04, and I have a spare TOS 4.04 that I could swap into the TOS 4.2 one.

I was wondering what the differences are from TOS 4.2 to TOS 4.4?

Is there a Text file with the fixes and or enhancements?

Also, before TOS 4.04 was released, were there any program fixes especially for TOS 4.02, that would be useless on TOS 4.04?"

Mickael Pointier tells Phantomm:

"From what I remember with Tos 4.02 there is no end of partition check, so on the good old 45 megs IDE drives that were formatted by default with 3 or 4 partitions, you could just f***ed up one of the partitions by adding too many things in the previous partition.

Tos 4.04 probably fixed more things, but I don't remember exactly.

With Tos 4.01 vs 4.02 it's easier to notice the difference, the 4.01 is buggy, and has an incomplete "3d look" that makes applications look very strange."

Rodolphe Czuba adds:

"I think the problem of end of partition going on the next is on TOS 4.01, not 4.02.

The difference between 4.02 & 4.04 is that TOS 4.04 do not more need the FOLDER.PRG in the AUTO.
And a XBIOS function about RS-232 port on Zilog was modified / corrected.

I do not remember the rest... if there is..."

'Cyril' adds:

"TOS 4.02 has a sound bug. You need FPATCH.PRG and FPATCH2.PRG to correct it for a single TOS only, not with MagiC/MiNT because MagiC/MiNT correct this bug."

Phantomm tells everyone who responded:

"I am trying to determine if I should swap, with this very bad bug, I think I'll do so asap!

Also guys, what type of chip is TOS 4.01 to TOS 4.04 on?
I mean, what's the official name of the chip?

I have a Chip Burner and what to know if I can use these type of chips on it or not."

Bob Dobalina asks about networking an ST and a PC:

"I have a Atari STe hooked to my router with a Lantronix UDS 10. I have a telnet bbs running. Is there a way to network my ST up so that I can transfer files to and from it to the pc?"

David Wade tells Bob:

"Depends on how many, how big, how often. One thing thats not easy is mapping drives. I used GAPFTP."

Everyone's favorite techie, Alison, adds:

"Here. I use the PARCP parallel cable. Documented here;
http://joy.sophics.cz/parcp/ Not really networking in the traditional sense but good for safely getting data back and forth. Quite fast too, about 50KB/s on a bad day.

Trouble is with PARCP is that everything has to be transferred explicitly, it's more like a data transfer application. But quite reliable and stable."

Joseph Place adds his thoughts:

"I have found the best ST solution to be STing for the TCPIP stack (software) and Ethernec for hardware. You can find info on my web site or many others. http://www.josephplace.com/atari.htm"

Lyndon Amsdon adds:

"Keep an eye out for the new NETUS-Bee as well!
http://hardware.atari.org"

Ronald Hall throws down the gauntlet and posts:

"Another network solution is always welcome in the Atari world. Can someone list the advantages over say, the EtherNEC?"

Alexander Beuscher tells Ronald:

"- small PCB
- no need for additional ISA networking card
- USB for all Ataris (though probably quiet slow on 8 MHz ones)

I think that's quiet a lot of advantages!"

Lyndon tells Alex:

"There's always a problem introducing some new hardware. No one buys it because there is no software written, and no software is written because no one has the hardware.

The idea is, having network and USB integrated on the same board it'll be handy for network primarily and with x amount of people having USB hardware to play with, hopefully some software will come about. I'm hoping this will also get Jan Thomas interested in writing USB software once again.

I should be updating my website soon, new re-design and some info on a new project."

While we're on the subject of networking, Claude Bourgoin asks about
going one step farther and accessing the internet over his local
network:

"I have a falcon networked to 2 PC's, one PC is windows 98, the
other PC is XP Pro. I am able to ping both PC's and my router so I
know the falcon is on the network. My question is how do I get the
falcon to access the internet thru the network."

Alan Hourihane tells Claude:

"First off, make sure the Falcon has a default route set to the
router. Then make sure the Falcon can resolve DNS names via the
router or via your ISP's DNS servers.

That should be it.

If you look at your WinXP box and type 'ipconfig /all' you'll get
the details from that that you need to put onto the Falcon."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same
time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying
when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Final Fantasy XIII for PS3!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""   PS3 Goes On Sale...Sorta!
                                     More Info for Parents?!
                                     And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   - The Latest Gaming News!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

                    Sony's PlayStation 3 Goes On Sale

Sony's PlayStation 3 (PS3) has gone on sale on the web despite not being
launched until November this year.

The next generation consoles are on offer as "pre-orders" to Europeans for
 550 ($1,020) at online shop, play.com.

The website says that because of an expected European shortage, it cannot guarantee delivery before Christmas.

The PS3 is the successor to the best-selling PlayStation 2 and will compete with Microsoft's Xbox 360 and Nintendo's Wii.

The Xbox 360 is already available, while the Wii is due out later this year.

All three consoles promise cutting edge processing and graphical power.

Sony currently dominates the console market with more than 100 million PlayStation 2s in homes around the world.

The electronics giant had originally planned to launch the new console in the spring, but was forced to delay because of technical problems with its high-definition Blu-ray DVD drive.

The PS3 comes in two different models. The basic model has a 20GB hard drive, while the more expensive model comes with a 60GB one.

The lower end model also lacks wi-fi, a slot for memory cards and a HDMI port for high-definition programmes.

The model for sale on play.com is the 60Gb model.

When Sony announced prices earlier this year it said that gamers would pay about 425 ($785) in the UK for the top end version of the machine.

play.com is also offering three games in its package. Driving simulator Formula One 06, flying game Warhawk and the karaoke-themed Singstar.

The website says the games shipped with the console may change due to availability.

Gamers will have to wait until later in the year to buy a console in the shops.

Japanese gamers will be the first to get their hands on the PS3 on November 11 while the console will arrive in the US and Europe on November 17.

                    Final Fantasy XIII - The Next Generation Of
                         Final Fantasy For Playstation 3

This latest project in the multi-platinum Final Fantasy series will encompass the simultaneous development of original titles for numerous platforms including the PlayStation 3 computer entertainment system, and mobile phones.

Fabula Nova Crystallis, defined in Latin as "the new tale of the crystal," is made up of several different titles based on variations of the Final Fantasy XIII universe. However, while each title in the project features different characters, different worlds, and different stories, all are ultimately based on and expand upon a common mythos.

Currently, development for Fabula Nova Crystallis entails two titles for the PlayStation 3 system: Final Fantasy XIII and Final Fantasy Versus XIII. In addition, Final Fantasy Agito XIII is also in development for mobile phones. However, the three new titles are only the beginning of the evolution of Fabula Nova Crystallis, with more announcements regarding other facets of the project scheduled for the near future.

One myth, countless stories Final Fantasy XIII

The New Tale of the Crystal

Like the light that shines through the Crystal, the universe shines with multi-colored content.

To celebrate the 13th title in the world-renowned Final Fantasy series, Square Enix has undertaken a colossal project involving the development of various content for multiple platforms. Fabula Nova Crystallis, defined in Latin as "the new tale of the crystal," is made up of several different titles based on variations of the Final Fantasy XIII universe. However, while each title in the project features different characters, different worlds, and different stories, all are ultimately based on and expand upon a common mythos.

Final Fantasy XIII

Final Fantasy XIII for PlayStation 3 system

A tale of souls from a futuristic civilization illuminated by the Light of the Crystal

This eagerly anticipated title takes full advantage of the PlayStation 3 system's advanced hardware, providing tangible, intuitive controls while delivering seamless transitions between real-time gameplay and stunning in-game cinematics. The latest in cutting-edge technology has been utilized in development of Final Fantasy XIII, thus making this newest addition to the Final Fantasy series worthy of the title "next generation."

Too Many Kids Can Still Buy Violent Video Games

The Federal Trade Commission on Wednesday told lawmakers it supports the video game industry's self-regulation of violent content but said too many U.S. children are still able to buy Mature-rated games in stores.

The U.S. video game industry, with revenue rivaling Hollywood box office sales, is at the center of a cultural war over racy and violent content in some titles.

Lydia Parnes, director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, told a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee the industry's system of rating video games is working.

Currently, it is up to retailers whether or not to sell M-rated games to minors. M-rated games contain content deemed appropriate for people aged 17 and up by the Entertainment Software Rating Board.

"Although retailers selling video games have steadily improved their record of denying underage children access to M-rated games, a significant percent

of children sent in as undercover shoppers are still able to buy these games," Parnes said in prepared testimony.

An FTC study found 42 percent of its undercover shoppers, children between the ages of 13 and 16, were able to buy an M-rated game last year. That is down from 69 percent in 2003.

"While these results are headed in the right direction, there is still substantial room for improvement," she said.

The FTC will survey consumers about the game rating system as part of a broad entertainment industry report, Parnes said.

Florida Republican Cliff Stearns, chairman of the panel, compared violent video games to hate speech. He urged the FTC to "get tough" with companies like Take-Two Interactive Software Inc., publisher of the popular game Grand Theft Auto. "They flout the law and continue to exploit our kids with violence and hate," Stearns said.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., which sells one-fourth of all video games sold in the United States, said it does not allow employees to sell M-rated games to children under age 17 unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian.

"We abide by the (industry) ratings and do everything possible to prevent children from obtaining inappropriate video games and to inform parents about video game content," Gary Severson, Wal-Mart senior vice president, told the panel.

Lawmakers Want More Video Game Info for Parents

Republican lawmakers said on Wednesday that parents need to know more about sexual content and violence in video games and criticized the FTC's handling of a complaint about a top-selling game, "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas."

The industry's voluntary ratings system and game makers have been under fire since last summer, when Take-Two Interactive Software Inc. pulled the blockbuster title from store shelves following complaints about hidden sex scenes that could be viewed with a downloaded program.

Congress asked the FTC to investigate. Last week, the agency reached a settlement with Take-Two that bars the company from misrepresenting rating or content descriptions.

At a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing on violent video games, Michigan Republican Fred Upton complained the settlement terms "aren't even a slap on the wrist."

"I guess I thought the FTC had a few more teeth," Upton added.

Texas Republican Joe Barton, chairman of the entire committee, said the FTC had yet to formally submit a report to Congress on its investigation.

"Given the sensitivity of the issue, it's not acceptable practice by the FTC to respond in such a tardy fashion," Barton said.

Another Republican, Cliff Stearns of Florida, compared violent video games

to hate speech and urged the FTC to "get tough" with companies like Take-Two.

"They flout the law and continue to exploit our kids with violence and hate," Stearns said.

But the FTC did not have the authority to impose civil penalties against Take-Two as part of the settlement, Lydia Parnes, director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, told the lawmakers.

A Take-Two spokesman declined to comment.

The popular "Grand Theft Auto" series of games is known for letting players commit crimes as they cruise through bleak urban landscapes. It is the best selling game franchise ever in the United States with more than $1 billion in sales.

Currently, it is up to retailers whether or not to sell M-rated games to minors. M-rated games have content deemed appropriate for people aged 17 and up by the Entertainment Software Rating Board.

Lawmakers said parents must have more information about the content of video games their children play.

Parnes said the FTC supports the video game industry's self-regulation of violent content, but said too many U.S. children are still able to buy M-rated games in stores.

"There is still substantial room for improvement," she said.

An FTC study found 42 percent of its undercover shoppers, children between the ages of 13 and 16, were able to buy an M-rated game last year. That is down from 69 percent in 2003.

The FTC will survey consumers about the game rating system as part of a broad entertainment industry report, Parnes said.

The fast-growing video game industry now generates revenue rivaling Hollywood box office sales.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., which accounts for one-fourth of all video games sold in the United States, said it does not sell M-rated games to children under age 17 unless they are accompanied by a parent or guardian. The company does "everything possible to prevent children from obtaining inappropriate video games" and to inform parents about content, Gary Severson, said Wal-Mart vice president.

Detox Clinic Set for Video Game Addicts

An addiction center is opening Europe's first detox clinic for video game addicts, offering in-house treatment for people who can't leave their joysticks alone.

Video games may look innocent, but they can be as addictive as gambling or drugs - and just as hard to kick, says Keith Bakker, director of Amsterdam-based Smith & Jones Addiction Consultants.

Bakker already has treated 20 video game addicts, aged 13 to 30, since January. Some show withdrawal symptoms, such as shaking and sweating, when they look at a computer console.

His detox program begins in July. It will run four to eight weeks, and will include therapy sessions, wilderness excursions, healthy lifestyle workshops and possibly medication.

Research into video gaming is still in its infancy, and researchers haven't agreed on how to define addiction. But many experts say it's clear many of the young people who show dependency on video games are in trouble.

"We have kids who don't know how to communicate with people face-to-face because they've spent the last three years talking to somebody in Korea through a computer," Bakker said. "Their social network has completely disappeared."

It can start with a Game Boy, perhaps given by parents hoping to keep their children occupied but away from the television. From there, it can progress to multilevel games that aren't made to be won.

Bakker said he has seen signs of addiction in children as young as 8.

About a dozen clinics already exist in the United States and Canada, and even one in China, as excessive gaming increasingly is being recognized worldwide as an ailment requiring treatment.

Elizabeth Woolley, who founded the Safe Haven halfway house for addicted gamers in Harrisburg, Pa., welcomed the idea that treating addicts is spreading to the Netherlands. "Thank God that somebody has finally recognized this is an issue," she said.

Jeroen Jansz, associate professor of communications research at the University of Amsterdam, estimates about 80 percent of boys aged 8 to 18 play some type of video game. Forty percent play at least 2 1/2 hours a day.

In a 2005 study, Jansz said gamers are overwhelmingly males, especially in violent games where adolescents find "a safe private laboratory where they can experience different emotions."

Hyke van der Heijden, 28, a graduate of the Amsterdam program, started playing video games 20 years ago. By the time he was in college he was gaming about 14 hours a day and using drugs to play longer.

"For me, one joint would never be enough, or five minutes of gaming would never be enough," he said. "I would just keep going until I crashed out."

Van der Heijden first went to Smith & Jones for drug addiction in October 2005, but realized the gaming was the real problem. Since undergoing treatment, he has distanced himself from his smoking and gaming friends. He says he has been drug- and game-free for eight months.

Like other addicts, Bakker said, gamers are often trying to escape personal problems. When they play, their brains produce endorphins, giving them a high similar to that experienced by gamblers or drug addicts. Gamers' responses to questions even mirror those of alcoholics and gamblers when asked about use.

"Many of these kids believe that when they sit down, they're going to play

two games and then do their homework," he said.

However, unlike other addicts, most gamers received their first game from their parents. "Because it's so new, parents don't see that this is something that can be dangerous," Bakker said.

Tim, a gamer who is under treatment, agreed to discuss his addiction on condition that his last name not be used. He said he began playing video games three years ago at age 18. Soon, he would not leave his room for dinner. Later, he began taking drugs to stay awake and play longer. Finally, he sought help and picked up other hobbies to occupy his time.

Richard Wood, a professor of International Gaming Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University, is skeptical about viewing heavy gamers as addicts. Wood says that gaming may be a symptom of a problem, but should be seen as a problem itself "just because a person does the activity a lot."

Bakker, however, says symptoms of addiction are easy to spot. Parents should take notice if a child neglects usual activities, spends several hours at a time with the computer and has no social life.

Bakker said parents of game addicts frequently echo the words of partners of cocaine addicts: "'I knew something was wrong, but I didn't know what it was.'"

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
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                 For The Love of Retro Video Games

From the Atari 2600, Intellivision, Sega Genesis and the Turbografx-16, many people of today's age seem to not appreciate what the gaming age has grown from.

A man named Nolan Bushnell in or around 1972 created the well-known game called Pong. This was a simple tennis-like game with two paddles and a ball going back and forth with increasing speed as the rounds progress.

At the time, this was an amazing feat. The industry has grown exponentially over the past 34 or so years.

Atari 2600 was the first console, well actually the most-known "first console," with the release of games such as Space Invaders, Adventure and Asteroids. The Magnavox Odessey, which didn't succeed, only released about 33 titles.

Soon after, the competition began, especially with the development of Intellivision, Commodore 64, and some more Atari console improvements such as the Atari 5200, which didn't do too well, and the Atari 7800.

Today, appreciation for many of these consoles has decreased drastically, and to many people, these consoles are crap, junk, garbage or just plain suck.

While game play and graphics aren't anywhere near today's gaming age, appreciation should still be intact. Some games are still played and involve competitions, such as Space Invaders and Asteroids, or any sort of shooter-type game, and are the most commonly known titles in Internet forum arcades.

The most popular competitive game today is known as Dance Dance Revolution (DDR), but this is more recent than old.

Japan, currently the largest game creator, has developed the well-known game series Final Fantasy and Dragon Quest, and has developed many consoles that have grown, such as Nintendo and Sony.

Nintendo, which started as a playing card developer, has become a major company. They created Nintendo (NES), Gameboy, Super Nintendo and many other variations and technological advancements. Currently Nintendo's console is the Gamecube and Nintendo DS (which is another Gameboy type model).

Sony has gone from Playstation to Playstation 2, and Playstation Portable (AKA the PSP).

Some people do appreciate the old age. So the graphics and gameplay aren't as great, but just look at what our parents grew up with and there should be some overall appreciation.

There are old titles out there that do in fact have great audio and gameplay, such as the Ys series (more known in Japan) and the classic Tetris title, but sadly, the retro age is dying. But it doesn't have to.

Think about it.

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                        A-ONE's Headline News
                   The Latest in Computer Technology News
                        Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

                          Yahoo Hit By Worm

Yahoo Inc., the world's largest provider of e-mail services, said on Monday that a software virus aimed at Yahoo Mail users had infected "a very small fraction" of its base of more than 200 million accounts.

The e-mail virus, or worm, has been dubbed Yamanner and landed in Yahoo mailboxes bearing the headline "New Graphic Site." Once opened, the message infects the computer and spreads to other users listed in Yahoo users' e-mail address books, security experts said.

The e-mail containing the virus need only be opened - in contrast to most

worms that are hidden in attachments and require users to take an additional step - to release the virus, according to computer security site Symantec Corp.

The Sunnyvale, California-based company advised users to update virus and firewall software on their computers and to block any e-mail sent from the address "av3@yahoo.com."

"We have taken steps to resolve the issue and protect our users from further attacks of this worm," Yahoo spokeswoman Kelley Podboy said in a statement.

"When we learn of e-mail abuse, such as a worm or other online threat, we take appropriate action," she said. "(A) solution has been automatically distributed to all Yahoo Mail customers, and requires no additional action on the part of the user."

Yamanner, first detected by Yahoo and major computer anti-virus software makers earlier on Monday, was ranked as having a low threat level by Trend Micro Inc. and McAfee Inc.

But Symantec considers the worm an "elevated threat," one step up from the lowest ranking in terms of relative danger.

Symantec's Security Response site suggested Yahoo Mail users might protect themselves by upgrading to the latest test version of the recently upgraded Yahoo Mail software.

"The worm cannot run on the newest version of Yahoo Mail Beta," Symantec's site said.

A Yahoo spokesman was not immediately available to comment on whether the company advised users to do this.

The worm exploits a vulnerability in Javascript technology used to make the mail program easier to use by triggering embedded HTML scripts to run in the computer user's browser.

The e-mail addresses are also sent to a remote online computer server, which may be used to run spam campaigns, experts said. The technical name of the worm goes by variants of "JS.Yamanner."

Yahoo Says E-mail Worm Now Contained

Yahoo Inc. said Tuesday it has contained a malicious program aimed at the millions of people who use its e-mail service, which ranks as the world's largest.

The worm, dubbed "Yamanner," infected a recipient's computer as soon as the toxic e-mail was opened. It then scanned contact lists for additional targets, according to security software maker Symantec Corp.

Sunnyvale, Calif.-based Yahoo said "a very small fraction" of its more than 200 million e-mail accounts were infected Monday when the problem was first identified. The worm didn't affect the next version of Yahoo's e-mail service, which remains in its test, or "beta," phase.

"We have taken steps to resolve the issue and protect our users from further attacks of this worm," Yahoo spokeswoman Kelley Podboy said. "The solution has been automatically distributed to all Yahoo Mail customers, and requires no additional action on the part of the user."

As a precaution against variations on the Yamanner worm, Yahoo advised its e-mail users to update their antivirus programs and block all incoming correspondence from av3(at)yahoo.com.

The worm arrived in the form of an e-mail containing JavaScript and contains the words "New Graphic Site" in the subject field, according to Symantec, the maker of Norton antivirus software.

Unlike many worms that require an attachment to be opened, the latest bug was unleashed as soon as the e-mail was opened. It burrowed into e-mail contact lists in search of addresses containing the domains yahoo.com and yahoogroups.com, according to Symantec.

Microsoft Warns of 8 "Critical" Security Flaws

Microsoft Corp. on Tuesday warned of eight "critical" security flaws in its Windows operating system and Office software that could allow attackers to take control of a computer.

Microsoft, whose Windows operating system runs on 90 percent of the world's computers, issued patches to fix the problems as part of its monthly security bulletin. It was the biggest such update since February 2005.

The company issued a total of 12 patches that address 21 security holes and cover problems in its Windows, Internet Explorer, Word, Powerpoint and Exchange Server products, security experts said.

"The significance of this large number of patches lies in the fact that 19 of them are remote code executions," said Amol Sarwate, manager of the Vulnerability Research Lab at Qualys.

The world's biggest software maker defines a flaw as "critical" when the vulnerability could allow a damaging Internet worm to replicate without the user doing anything to the machine.

Six of the critical flaws related to Windows and two affected Office. Microsoft also issued another two security warnings it rated at its second-highest level of "important" for Windows, as well as one it gave a severity rating of "moderate."

It also warned of an "important" flaw in its Microsoft Exchange software that allows users to send and receive e-mail along with other forms of communication through computer networks.

The company has been working for more than three years to improve the security and reliability of its software as more and more malicious software targets weaknesses in Windows and other Microsoft software.

The latest patches, which are free to Microsoft software owners, can be downloaded at www.microsoft.com/security.

Microsoft Releases 8 Critical Patches

Microsoft Corp. released eight critical updates Tuesday to patch security
holes in its Windows operating system, Internet Explorer browser, Windows
Media Player and Office productivity software.

The critical patches - so called because they address problems deemed to
pose the highest threat in Microsoft's security warning system - all are
designed to prevent an attacker from taking control of another person's
computer without that user's permission.

The Redmond, Wash.-based software maker also released three patches rated
"important" and one that was rated "moderate."

Users can go to http://www.microsoft.com/security to download the Microsoft
patches.

Early Peer-to-Peer Music Site Gets Back in Game

Like Napster and BitTorrent before it, LTDnetwork's Qtrax is a brand from
the early days of peer-to-peer music piracy that is relaunching as a
completely legal service.

The reborn version formalized the evolution by announcing a deal with EMI
Music to make the music company's catalog available to its users.

Qtrax still allows consumers to get free music, but there will be no free
lunch. The service is ad-supported, and the free songs are in a proprietary
".mpq" format that can only be played a limited number of times and only on
the computer to which they were downloaded.

Additionally, each time a track is played, the Qtrax player offers
click-to-buy purchasing.

It also suggests that the user upgrade to a premium subscription service
for a flat monthly fee, in which case they get unlimited downloads in
Windows Media format that can be moved or transferred to almost any digital
music player except Apple's iPod. The songs become unplayable should the
subscription lapse.

"Qtrax is going to offer the consumer a pretty cool way to sample and
discover music in a way that P2P users are used to," said Ken Parks, EMI's
senior vice president for strategy and business development. "The
difference is, you'll be presented with stuff that is cleared in a way that
respects copyright yet preserving that 'free' experience. You'll not be
asked to pay until you want to pull the trigger, so it's a pretty friendly
place to explore and discover music."

Financial terms of the EMI deal were not disclosed, but EMI does get a
share of advertising revenue generated by Qtrax.

"Advertisers are willing to pay a lot of money to be associated with music,
and the music industry is willing to cooperate as long as the value is
preserved and the artists get paid," Parks said.

Some of the advertising will be served in way relevant to the results of song searches and will include click-through options to buy products on Shopping.com.

An additional opportunity allows labels to promote artists through spotlight placement on the Web site. EMI is testing the capability internally with such artists as KT Tunstall, Coldplay and Gorillaz.

Parks said that EMI also will get valuable data because it will know every time a song is played and whether that resulted in the consumer making a purchase. That same tracking capability ensures that royalty payments are very accurate, he added.

There is no firm date for Qtrax to launch, though EMI has begun delivering and registering its content with Qtrax's filtering system, powered by Audible Magic. The company has said it is waiting to sign with the other major labels before it goes live to the public and is on schedule to enter a test phase this year.

Qtrax will incorporate community-building and music discovery tools along with incentive programs that provide discounts or additional music plays.

Founded in October 2000, LTDnetwork is a division of Brilliant Technologies Corp. that specializes in technologies, software and services for online retail, advertising, media and marketing companies.

In April, EMI Music announced a separate initiative with Rhythm NewMedia, the first major label agreement to provide videos to an ad-supported mobile service.

Collaborative trials already are under way. The ads are embedded in the on-demand programming similar to television but are highly targeted to individual users.

Internet2 Moves to Level 3

The Internet2 Consortium, a group of universities, research centers, and companies exploring the possibilities of a very high-speed Internet, announced an agreement on Thursday with Level 3 Communications to deploy a nationwide backbone that initially will offer speeds up to 100 Gbps.

This rate is 10 times the current top speed of Internet2's Abilene backbone, but it's only the beginning.

Under the multiyear agreement, Level 3 will provide dedicated facilities for multiple 10-Gbps connections. The Consortium has said that it has plans to scale up the backbone to as much as 800 Gbps over time.

Network users at research facilities will be able to obtain dedicated 1-Gbps speeds for their projects, or, through scheduling, rates as high as 10 Gbps.

Dozens of projects across the U.S. and other countries already are experimenting with very high-speed connections through Internet2.

Astronomers are remotely controlling massive telescopes from their distant offices, or combining voluminous amounts of data from multiple telescopes

into one virtual telescope.

Underwater explorers, such as Robert Ballard, the discoverer of the wreck of the Titanic, are broadcasting live, two-way video programs from the ocean floor.

Telesurgery is being conducted by such places as the Advanced Center for Telemedicine and Surgical Innovation of the University of Cincinnati, where the surgeon is thousands of miles away from the patient.

The new Level 3 backbone will allow researchers to obtain dedicated, very high-bandwidth connections when they need them.

"Some researchers, like astronomers, need large amounts of data to move at the same time," said Lauren Rotman, a spokesperson for the Internet2 Consortium. "The best way is to provide dedicated, optical circuits, which they can get now but can take days to set up. But, with the new backbone, they'll be able to provision these circuits on demand."

Will this Internet of the future, although a research test-bed that is not yet open to the public, impact consumers or businesses?

"What Level 3 is hoping," said Cindy Whelan, an analyst at technology firm Current Analysis, "is that they're going to get some experience with these special kinds of very high-speed applications and can parlay them into something that they can do with their regular customers."

The Internet2 Consortium includes more than 200 universities, research centers, and companies that are developing advanced network applications and technologies for research and higher education.

Level 3 Communications is an international communications and information services company, operating one of the largest Internet backbones in the world.

EBay Seeks Ways To Keep Buyers Coming Back

For eBay, it's a matter of supply outstripping demand.

Facing mounting competition in its core market, online auction leader eBay Inc. is seeking new ways to drive consumers to use its auction system by making the buying process more convenient.

It is opening up its auction system to allow more business to be done off eBay on independent sites, seeking to fend off the threat posed by search-based advertising offered by Google Inc. and Yahoo Inc. that both drives customers to, but also lures traffic away from, eBay.

Over the years, a vast sub-industry has grown up to support part-time and professional sellers on eBay. But the basic way buyers take part in auctions has changed surprisingly little.

By and large, bidders still sit hunched over their computers, constantly clicking the "refresh" button on their Web browsers to guard against suddenly being outbid in the final seconds or minutes of auctions.

"All the investment has been on improving the seller experience," said

Indraj Gill, chairman and CEO of start-up UnWired Buyer of Austin, Texas, which makes notification tools to help users make last-minute auction bids.

"The experience (of using eBay) hasn't changed very much on the buyer side from what it was 10 years ago," maintains Gill, who until last year had been director of marketing for computer maker Dell Inc. in China.

UnWired Buyer developed a new feature introduced on eBay this week, which calls bidders on their mobile phones to notify them of last-minute bids in the final minutes before an auction closes, allowing them to respond and win deals.

"It's all about demand, stupid," Bill Cobb, president of eBay North America, self-mockingly told a crowd of upward of 15,000 of eBay's most loyal sellers, who packed into an arena at eBay's annual user conference here on Tuesday night.

With more than 200 million registered users, eBay is far and away the world's foremost e-commerce site. But it is under pressure from eBay sellers, who increasingly are learning the tricks of how to drive customer traffic to their own sites.

Over six days of speeches, product demonstrations and training sessions at the Mandalay Bay hotel complex, eBay has introduced revised auction policies and new software tools to rev up the volume of sales transactions.

Nabit, of Indianapolis, Indiana, offers a desktop trading application that makes bidding on multiple eBay auctions akin to the scrolling news and quote systems that day-traders use in the stock market. UnWired Buyer is unveiling a similar system.

FilmLoop, a Palo Alto, California-based company, offers a novel photo broadcasting network that allows independent Web sites to pull in running feeds of eBay auction items to allow users to watch for items they want without remaining on eBay.

"There are a number of accelerants in front of us," Cobb said in an interview following his speech, citing as examples its soon-to-be-heavily promoted eBay Express instant-purchasing format and policy changes to rein in shady sales practices.

EBay Express offers a subset of the goods offered on eBay's vast auction site at a set price, allowing buyers to complete purchases in seconds or minutes rather than waiting up to a week for a bid placed on the auction site to close.

Still in the early stages are new marketing pushes into areas such as on-site advertising, click to call customer support and other efforts at customer lead generation. This week, eBay said it plans to pay independent Web sites a cut of sales that result from featuring selected eBay listings on their sites.

Two weeks ago, eBay struck a broad alliance with Yahoo Inc. in its core U.S. market to help it better compete with Google Inc., which according to a recent report by RBC Capital will later this month introduce GBuy, a rival online payments system to eBay's market leading PayPal service.

But many efforts to improve the transparency of the buying process also make it easier for sellers to take business off the eBay site and avoid paying eBay's sale closing fees, cautions Stifel Nicolaus analyst Scott

Devitt.

"If I was running a business, I would take a step back, and say to myself: 'Wait a second, why would I pay eBay?"' he said.

"I still think there is a demand issue on eBay. I am not sure that anything announced at the conference is going to change that," said Devitt, who, while concerned by challenges eBay faces, still recommends that investors buy eBay shares.

eBay Members Can Sound Off

Users of eBay are getting new ways to tout their wares and coach one another on how to use the auction Web site.

EBay Inc. has created eBay Wiki, a collaboratively written repository on hundreds of topics relating to trading on the site. Unlike forums, in which members respond to previous posts with new messages, wikis let anyone add, delete or change any item, so that the end result appears as a collaborative narrative.

Rachel Makool, the company's senior director of community development, said eBay wanted to lend more structure to member communication and make it easier to search for particular topics.

The company also said it will host blogs for members, going beyond the "about me" pages that users can offer with links to outside blogs.

She said the blogs are meant to make members "more comfortable with each other." For example, she said, by putting their pictures on eBay blogs, sellers might make buyers more confident about potential transactions.

The wiki is being created for the site by JotSpot Inc., whose founder, Joe Kraus, said few other consumer sites have embraced wikis so aggressively.

"This is wiki's coming of age in a way, and the beginning of what will be a trend," he said.

AOL's Netscape Web Portal Is Reborn

AOL is breathing new life into Netscape.com with a revamped design - still in beta - that takes a page from the strategy playbook of user-driven sites such as Digg.com and Del.icio.us.

Andrew Weinstein, a spokesperson for AOL, said the new offering is designed to build on the popularity of such sites, but with a new twist.

In a tip of the hat to MySpace and other social-networking sites, Netscape.com users will be able to submit stories, blogs, video clips, or other information to the site, with the content ranked by the number of votes received from users, the number of comments it generates, and other factors.

The content drawing the most attention gets top billing on the page,

Weinstein explained, with the listings continuously updated.

To ensure the accuracy and relevance of what is being posted on the site, a team of eight "anchors" will review all entries, add their two cents to some stories, and pull up items that they consider deserving of priority.

Sites like Digg.com have had problems with posting inaccurate or incomplete information - most recently with lead stories on the firing of Sun CEO Scott McNealy - but Netscape's anchors would be able to prevent such mistakes from appearing on the site, Weinstein said.

"The anchors also can dive deeper into the pool of available stories and pull them to the top based on their expertise in a specific area or the timeliness of an item," he added. "They will provide context as well, providing insights that other people don't have."

Netscape.com users will be able to contribute blog entries, video clips, and other content to any of the 30 content areas, including music, politics, money, art, food, family, careers, and fitness.

And, much like social-networking sites, Netscape.com will let people set up their own pages and establish a friends list for sharing what is on the site and who is voting for any particular entry.

"You can look over the shoulder of a friend as he or she looks over the content," said Weinstein.

AOL is planning to launch the new portal on July 1. Those interested in taking a peek at what the new design will look like can visit www.beta.netscape.com.

Google Tests Web Buying System

Internet search leader Google Inc. is testing a system that aims to speed purchases online but bears no resemblance to the popular PayPal payments service of Web auctioneer eBay, Google's chief executive said on Thursday.

Analysts had recently speculated whether Google would directly compete with PayPal, dubbing its potential new service "GBuy." Google has not yet announced details of such a service or given it a name.

But Google CEO Eric Schmidt provided limited details about the system on Thursday. The company's payment system will aim to facilitate quicker purchases by a consumer from a marketer, and a beta version is expected soon, he said.

"It's not like PayPal at all," Schmidt said when asked about "GBuy" during a New York meeting hosted by Conde Nast's new Portfolio business magazine.

"It makes no sense for us to go into businesses that are occupied by existing leaders," he said. "We want to solve new problems in the payments space."

He said the system was targeted at advertisers and not general consumers, but he did not elaborate on how it differed from PayPal. Google officials could not be reached for further details.

At least one analyst saw similarities between the two systems.

"Google management is getting off on a technicality" in saying its purchasing system differs from PayPal, said RBC Capital Markets analyst Jordan Rohan of Schmidt's remarks. "A merchant-to-consumer payments system, that's close enough."

In a research note last week, Rohan wrote that Google was likely to launch such a service by the end of the month, saying there was no reason it could not expand to consumer-to-consumer transactions like many PayPal payments.

Google would not charge merchants for the service during the beta phase, but could be expected to take fees of up to 2 percent after some period of time, Rohan wrote.

"You have to target the advertisers first," he said, referring to the need to get a critical mass of merchants on board to make a purchasing system attractive to consumers.

Google has been expanding the technology underlying its search advertising to send targeted messages to individual consumers using other media, including traditional outlets such as magazines.

Such targeted marketing is viewed as one new frontier for growth in the advertising industry. Schmidt said its adoption could help to boost advertising dollars, and even divert money that companies spend on sales and marketing teams to Google and its rivals.

"Eventually we hope that a targeted ad would be better than a targeted sales person," Schmidt said.

To that end, Google has tested placing targeted ads in magazines based on subscriber zip codes, a system that could be extended to newspapers, he said.

Ads served up to customers searching for information on their mobile phones are being tested in Japan and there are plans for a similar service to test in Europe, Schmidt said.

EBay Readies New Advertising System

Just in case you aren't already spending too much time or money on eBay, the auction giant is extending its reach even further around the Web with a new context-sensitive advertising system designed to bring you back to the fold if you stray too far.

Michael van Swaaij, eBay's chief strategy officer, announced on Saturday at the eBay Developers Conference in Las Vegas that the company will soon release eBay AdContext, a system of ads that will run on other sites and direct visitors to eBay auctions.

A military history site, for instance, might have keywords that generate eBay ads linking to an auction of military memorabilia.

As with other contextual ad systems, the ads are generated by a few lines of code added to those sites' Web pages. When new auctions appear for the same keyword - for example, a different auction of military memorabilia -

the ad will automatically update to point to the new eBay auction.

The ad system, similar to Google's and Yahoo's, will split revenue with the Web affiliate sites. A portion of the resulting auction sales will go to those sites, depending on volume.

Matt Del Percio, a Yankee Group analyst, said AdContext is another sign of eBay's intent to diversify. "Being just a one-armed shopping center isn't going to cut it," he said. "EBay's looking to become more of a portal, offering consumers more access channels."

But not all observers think eBay would be wise to diversify.

Adam Sarner, an analyst for Gartner, said the new service might indeed accentuate eBay's value, but he questioned whether it is a good move for the company to start getting away from its core competencies, linking to other things and doing other services. "What does eBay become?" he asked.

This latest move comes in the midst of a changing landscape for eBay, which is currently one of the largest customers for Google's AdWords. It is difficult to do a search on Google without seeing an advertisement appear for an eBay-related auction on the right side of the search-results page.

In addition, there are reports that Google will soon offer an online payment system, which would be a competitor to eBay's popular online payment system, PayPal.

On Tuesday, eBay is expected to announce tie-ins between its auction service and Skype, the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service it purchased last year.

Reportedly, eBay will allow sellers to embed links in their eBay pages, enabling "click to call" features so that sellers and potential buyers can directly connect through voice, text messaging, or video conference calls.

Phishing Scam Uses PayPal Secure Servers

A cross-site scripting flaw in the PayPal Web site allows a new phishing attack to masquerade as a genuine PayPal login page with a valid security certificate, according to security researchers.

Fraudsters are exploiting the flaw to harvest personal details, including PayPal logins, Social Security numbers and credit card details, according to staff at Netcraft Ltd., an Internet services company in Bath, England. The PayPal site, owned by eBay, allows users to make online payments to one another, charged to their credit cards, and login credentials for the service are a prized target of fraudsters.

The attack works by tricking PayPal members into following a maliciously crafted link to a secure page on PayPal's site. Anyone thinking to check the site's security certificate at this point will see that it is a valid 256-bit certificate belonging to the site, Netcraft employee Paul Mutton wrote in the company's blog on Friday.

However, the URL exploits a flaw in PayPal's site that allows the fraudsters to inject some of their own code into the page that is returned, he wrote. In this case, the result is a warning that the user's account may

have been compromised, and that they "will now be redirected to Resolution Center." The page to which they are redirected asks for their PayPal account details - but thanks to the cross-site scripting flaw in the PayPal site, and the data injected into the URL by the fraudsters, the page is no longer on the PayPal site. Instead, the page steals the login details and sends them to the fraudsters' server, then prompts the user for other personal information, Mutton said.

The Web server harvesting the personal details is hosted in Korea, Mutton said.

The cross-site scripting technique makes the phishing attempt difficult to detect, said Mike Prettejohn, also of Netcraft.

If the malicious link arrived by e-mail, then "there would be clues in the mail that it's not genuine," he said. "It's a technique chosen by fraudsters because it is hard to spot."

Although there could be benign uses of cross-site scripting to transfer data between sites, the technique has an inherent security risk, Prettejohn said. "I don't think people would intentionally use it," he said.

"If somebody knows there's a cross-site scripting opportunity on their site, the right thing to do would be to fix it," he said.

E-newspapers Just Around the Corner. Really.

Cheap digital screens that can be rolled up and stuffed into a back pocket have been just around the corner for the last three decades.

But as early as this year, the future may finally arrive. Some of the world's top newspapers publishers are planning to introduce a form of electronic newspaper that will allow users to download entire editions from the Web on to reflective digital screens said to be easier on the eyes than light-emitting laptop or cellphone displays.

Flexible versions of these readers nay be available as early as 2007.

The handheld readers couldn't come a moment too soon for the newspaper industry, which has struggled to maintain its readership and advertising from online rivals.

Publishers Hearst Corp. in the U.S., Pearson Plc.'s Les Echos in Paris and Belgian financial paper De Tijd are planning a large-scale trials of the readers this year.

Earlier attempts by book publishers to sell digital readers failed due to high prices and a lack of downloadable books.

But a new generation of readers from Sony Corp. and iRex, a Philips Electronics spin-off, have impressed publishers with their sharp resolution and energy efficiency, galvanizing support for the idea again.

"This could be a real substitution for printed paper," Jochen Dieckow, head of the news media and research division of Ifra, a global newspaper

association based in Germany, said.

It's easy to see why publishers are keen. Digital newspapers, so called e-newspapers, take advantage of two prevailing media trends - the growth of online advertising and widespread use of portable devices like the iPod music player.

Nearly all papers run Web sites, but few readers relish pulling out laptops in transit or risk dropping one in the bathroom.

E-newspapers would cut production and delivery costs that account for some 75 percent of newspaper expenses.

Circulation in the $55 billion U.S. newspaper industry has slid steadily for nearly two decades as papers compete with Internet news for attention and advertising dollars.

Some publishers now see new devices as a way to help them snatch a bigger slice of online advertising and protect their franchise in reading away from home.

Ad spending on newspaper Web sites grew 32 percent in 2005 but only accounted for 4 percent of total ad spending in newspapers, according to the Newspaper Association of America.

Still, little is known about demand for an e-paper. "The number of consumers who are interested in reading on the go as opposed to listening to music on the go is probably smaller in the U.S. today," NPD Group analyst Ross Rubin said.

Sony and iRex's new devices employ screen technology by E Ink, which originated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab. Investors include Hearst, Philips, McClatchy Co., Motorola Inc. and Intel Corp.

The company produces energy-efficient ink sheets that contain tiny capsules showing either black or white depending on the electric current running through it.

Some of the latest devices apply E Ink's sheets to glass transistor boards, or back planes, which are rigid. But by 2007, companies such as U.K.-based Plastic Logic Ltd will manufacture screens on flexible plastic sheets, analysts say.

Separately, Xerox Corp. and Hewlett-Packard Co. are developing methods to produce flexible back planes cheaply. Xerox, in particular, has created a working prototype of system that lets manufacturers create flexible transistor boards much like one would print a regular paper document.

Production costs are expected to be low enough soon for publishers to consider giving away such devices for free with an annual subscription. Data on subscribers could also help publishers better tailor ads.

Sony's reader will cost between $300 and $400. "If you can get one of these products to cost less than the cost of a year's subscription it could probably work," Kenneth Bronfin, president of Hearst Interactive Media, said.

He declined to name which other groups plan testing, but said Hearst's San Francisco Chronicle and Houston Chronicle will likely be among the first

of its 12 daily papers to offer such devices to several hundred subscribers
later this year.

In Europe, Ifra is discussing trials with 21 newspapers from 13 countries.
The New York Times Co. is a member.

Sony is separately in discussions with some publishers to offer newspaper
downloads in its e-bookstore due to launch this summer, although no
decision has been made, said Lee Shirani, vice president of Sony's online
content service, Sony Connect.

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